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Toilet paper teaches safe sex in prison

By Jan Huisman

12-05-2009



NewCompliance Director Bo Wiesman on his company's educational toilet paper

Dutch prisons introduced new toilet paper this week, printed with recommendations regarding good hygiene, safe sex, and coping with aggression. The Ministry of Justice purchased 40,000 rolls of the educational toilet paper for a one-week trial.

Bo Wiesman, director of infection prevention company NewCompliance, said he was approached by the Ministry of Justice after they heard of the project's success in a Rotterdam hospital. In the hospital trial, the use of soap and cleansing alcohol increased by 35 percent after the toilet paper was introduced, according to Mr Wiesman.

The Ministry of Justice hopes messages such as "wash your hands" and "always use a condom" will have a positive influence on prisoner behaviour.

"A lot of people don't know these basic hygiene rules," Mr Wiesman said.

Sex does happen

The often explicit toilet paper received mocking reviews in the Dutch press, in particular a suggestion for safe oral sex. "Boldly printed toilet paper is supposed to keep inmates from jumping one another without protection," writes de Telegraaf.

Mr Wiesman said the issue is no laughing matter.

"Sex does happen in prisons. The only thing that people don't know, is how much it happens. In recent research in the Netherlands and Germany they asked a lot of prisoners, 'is sex happening in this prison,' and they all said 'yes, it is happening'. When asked, 'did you have sex in this prison,' all the prisoners said, 'no, we didn't'."

"It's not spoken about, so that's why this toilet roll is a very suitable tool to bring this to the attention. We are seeing that the requests for STD tests are already increasing."

Hygiene guidelines

Dutch correctional facilities are not afflicted with any particular hygiene problem, Mr Wiesman said, but the Ministry of Justice wants to use the toilet paper as a way of communicating new hygiene guidelines to staff and inmates.

Christian Democrat MP Rikus Jager today voiced concerns to Justice Minister Nebahat Albayrak, according to de Telegraaf. Apart from the extra expense, Mr Jager thinks the explicit toilet paper could upset victims of sexual abuse.



Tags: aggression, hygiene, Ministry of Justice, Netherlands, Prison, safe sex, toilet paper

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